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ABSTRACT

Following the principle of planned development for all phases of economic and cultural institutions, library planning and the resultant library legislation in socialist countries emanates from the supreme legislative authority of the state. Historically, existing legislation derives from the date of establishment of socialist governments. Library legislation changes in accord with tasks society imposes on libraries and reflects the government's concern for the development of libraries and the raising of their role in society. A regular component of long range planning, such legislation is most frequently developed in the form of five year plans which acquire the validity of law upon implementation. Library laws derive from the specific conditions of a country, its cultural features, and these traits of socialist librarianship: (1) libraries are important ideological and information institutions which promote education in general, communistic education of the working people, dissemination of scientific Marxist-Leninist ideology and the achievements of science and technology; (2) the state system of library service is available to all in a library network evenly distributed throughout the country; (3) the overwhelming majority of libraries are subsidized and centrally directed by the state; and (4) broad sections of the working people are active participants in the establishment and use of libraries. (RAA)

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LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

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LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

Library legislation, like the laws in all other spheres of life, are determined by the social and state structure of a country. So, naturally, library legislation should be regarded as a historical category that changes together with the tasks society imposes upon libraries. It is generally known that in some countries library laws already appeared in the mid 19 th century and later, in keeping with social development, they were frequently amended and supplemented.

Socialist library legislation goes back to the first years of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The communist party and Soviet state regard the cultural revolution as a component of reconstruction of society on socialist lines. It was then that the object to put all cultural riches and achievements of world science at the disposal of the masses was set for the first time in history.

In the realization of the cultural revolution, the education of people of a new society and the development of this society, the CPSU and V.I.Lenin attached great importance to the role of the book and the library. In some of his articles devoted to librarianship V.I.Lenin pointed out that it in order to built a new society people must acquire the habit of reading books and of using the library regularly.

In the first years of Siviet power a number of laws and decrees of the government, envisaging the preservation and broad development of librarianship in the difficult conditions of the Civil War and military intervention, were passed. It is enough to mention such important documents of the Soviet state as the

decrees "On the Organization of Librarianship" (June 7, 1918); "On the Preservation of Libraries and Book Depositories" (July 17, 1918); "On the State of Librarianship" (January 30, 1919); "On the Handing Over of Bibliographic Activities to the State Publishing House" (June of 1921); "On the Centralization of Librarianship in the RSFSR" (November 3, 1920), etc.

It deserves special mention that all these decrees were signed by V.I.Lenin and reflected his concepts of the way librarianship should be organized and of the trends of library activities in conditions of the socialist state. V.I.Lenin considered the broad development of librarianship to be one of the main tasks of the socialist revolution. In subsequent years the CPSU and Soviet government continued to show a marked interest in the development and improvement of library activities, a representative example of this care and interest being the Decree of the supreme legislative body of the coutry, the Central Executive Committee of the USSR "On Librarianship in the USSR", adopted in 1934. This document reflected the achievements in librarianship at the new atage of development of the country. It also suggested some ways and methods of expansion of the rural library network and measures for the augmentation of material resources and the improvement of training of library personnel.

Legislative acts passed in some other countries at the initial stage of their socialist development also determined and consolidated the leading role that the socialist state and its organs play in the preservation of book stocks, the organization of library activities and the regular provision of libraries with books. For example, in Poland work on the draft of the library law was

begun as early as in 1944, even before the war ended and in April of 1946 the Polish government adopted the Decree on Libraries and the Preservation of Library Stocks in accordance with which libraries were nationalized and a State system of libraries of different types was established. The law also ensured the availability of libraries to all. In the Socialist Republic of Rumania and the Hungarian People's Republic similar decrees of the Councils of Ministers of these countries were respectively passed in 1951 and 1952. A similar decree was published in 1957 in the People's Republic of Bulgaria and in 1957 and 1962 in Yugoslavia.

The history of library legislation in the socialist countries displays that from the very beginning it was based of on V.I.Lenin's progressive concepts of the responsibility of the socialist state for the organization of librarianship in the coutry in the interests of the broad masses of the population, the active participation of libraries in the resolving of general problems of socialist construction, the availability of libraries to all and close coordination of activities of libraries of different types. At different stages of development of the socialist countries their library laws, naturally, changed reflecting the changes, which took place in the concrete conditions of library work and in keeping with the tasks imposed upon them in different periods. Nevertheless the main principles of socialist librarianship remained stable.

In the socialist countries library laws are an important instrument in the reorganization of library activities on socialist lines. They reflect the great care that the communist and workers' parties and governments of these countries show for the development of libraries and for the raising of their role in society.

Expansive and diverse in form and content, the acting library legislation of these countries does not only reflect the specific conditions of the country and the characteristic features of its culture, it also reflects the common traits, which characterize the librarianship of socialist society in general. Among these common characteristics are the following:

1) recognition of libraries as of important ideological and information institutions which actively promote education in general communistic education of the working-people, dissemination of scientific Marxist-Leninist ideology and achievements of science and technology; it should be emphasized here that socialist library legislation proceeds from the open recognition of the Party spirit of library activities, the principle of directing these activities towards the attainment of political, economic and cultural goals of socialist society;

2) organization of the State system of library service based on the principles of in availability to all and democratism, the existence of an expansive network of libraries evenly distributed throughout the territory of each country, which allows the people at large to use library stocks;

3) the State character of librarianship manifest in the fact that the overwhelming majority of libraries are subsidized by the State and in the existence of the system of organizational and methodological guidance of libraries and centralized provision of libraries with new literature;

4) active participation of broad sections of the working-people in the establishment of libraries and library activity in general, the existence of an impressive network of libraries, created on the initiative and the monies of social organizations and the population in general.

The outstanding trait of development of socialist society is the planned development of all components of its economics and cultural institutions including libraries. When speaking on library legislation of the socialist countries it should be borne in mind that the five-year plans of development operating in these countries, after their approval by the supreme legislative authorities (parliaments) of socialist countries, acquire the validity of laws the implementation of which is compulsory. Development of libraries represents a component of plans of national economy. For example, in the USSR in the period from 1965 to 1975, in accordance with State plans, over 40 thousand public and scientific libraries were opened and about 50 thousand new buildings were erected. The number of library workers increased by 140 000.

The experience of libraries of the socialist countries shows that planning is a requisite condition of the favorable development of national, bibliographical and information systems and of the realization of such programmes as NATIS.

The legislative and administrative acts, which direct and regulate library activities, are highly diverse in their form, juristic force and sphere of action. For example, the "Juristic Manual for Librarians", published in the GDR, mentions 11 types of documents, ranging from general directives and laws to special departamental instructions.[1] Similar diversity is observed in the collection of directives dealing with librarianship in the USSR.[2]

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1) Rech. ABC für Bibliothekare, 1975, Lpz, VEB-Bibl.Inst. 1974, s. 7-12

2) Rukovodiashchiye materialy po bibliotechnomu delu. Spravochnik. M., "Kniga", 1975, 224 p.

The most important of these legislative materials are the decrees and directives of the communist and workers' parties, ruling in the socialist countries, and acts of supreme State legislative and executive bodies: parliaments, Councils of Ministers and ministries.

The most important documents within the frame-work of Soviet library legislation passed in the last two decades were the Decrees of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On the State and Means of Improving Librarianship in the USSR" (September of 1958) and "On the Raising of the Role of Libraries in the Communistic Education of Working-People and Scientific and Technical Progress" (May of 1974).

TheseDecrees present a profound analysis of the results of library development in the USSR and a programme for the further development of Soviet libraries. The Decree of 1974 imposes upon the libraries the task of a fuller utilization of the vast riches they have accumulated to promote the education of people of a new mould, citizens of the developed socialist society and for the purposes of acceleration of scientific and technical progress.

The Decree emphasizes the necessity of disseminating achievements of science, technology and progressive professional experience through the activities of scientific, technical and public libraries. It also points out the necessity of providing specialists engaged in national economy with operative scientific and technical information and of rendering of differentiated assistance to readers. The Decree envisages the centralization of public libraries, the improving of the provision of libraries with literature, the introduction of centralized processing of literature in library collectors, the establishment of republi-

can and regional juvenile libraries and depository libraries.

This document also contained important instructions concerning the expansion of library training, the building and technical equipment of libraries and their planned distribution throughout the country. The State Interdepartamental Library Committee attached to the USSR Ministry of Culture was set up for the coordination of activities of libraries of all systems.

The Decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU envisages the working out of a number of administrative acts. Already today, when the fourth year of this five-year plan period is drawing to its close, we can say that many important points of this Decree have been put into effect, including such cardinal endeavous as the centralization of public libraries (as of now 80% of libraries have been centralized), the improvement of provision of libraries with literature, the raising of wages of librarians and the organization of depository libraries. In the course of implementation of this Decree the coordination of activities of different state organs and social organizations, that have large library networks, has become more efficient.

The last decade in all European socialist countries is marked by vigorous legislative activity in the field of librarianship. On April 9, 1968 the Polish Peoples' Republic adopted the Library Law, on May 31, 1968 the GDR Council of Ministers approved the expansive decree on the tasks of library systems in the period of establishment of the developed system of socialism in the GDR. On January 20, 1970 the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria passed the Decree "On the Approval of the Principal Propositions Concerning the Establishment of an Itegrated Library System in the Bulgarian People's Republic".

In 1973 Law No 703, which appreciably contributed to the organization of the contemporary national library system, was passed in Rumania.

In 1976 the Decree Extraordinary of the Presidium of the Hungarian People's Republic and the Order of the HPR Council of Ministers concerning measures promoting the implementation of the Decree were approved in 1976. Work connected with the improvement of library legislation is now being conducted in Czechoslovakia and Rumania.

Even this short list of the major acts of the last decade manifests the activity of the socialist countries in the field of library legislation, which is regarded by them as an important instrument of organization of library service and of the improvement of the practice and theory of librarianship.

The Nalid library laws of the socialist countries reflect the national characteristics of librarianship, state structure and cultural traditions.

At the same time these laws, as was mentioned above, mark the coinciding trends, wwhich reflect all those things which the libraries of these countries have in common. In other words these laws characterize socialist librarianship in general at the present stage of its development. The library laws of socialist countries are directed towards the realization of the cardinal task: the establishment of an integrated State system of libraries based on their coordination with the purpose of full and efficient utilization of book resources by libraries in the interests of the further advancement of socialist economics, science and culture.

Librarians and professional associations in the socialist countries actively participate in the working out and discussions of library laws. The Seim of the Polish People's Republic adopted the Library Law of 1968 basing its approval on the report of one of its deputies, who was a librarian. The active participation of librarians in the drawing up of library laws ensures the high professional level of these documents. The most distinguished feature of these laws is that they are not limited to money matters as it is frequently the case in other countries, these laws impose concrete tasks upon libraries and indicate ways and means of their implementation and ensure State grants for this purpose.

The sphere of action of library laws of the socialist countries is vast and practically covers all aspects of library work: their objectives and content of activity, organization of libraries and their typology, affiliation, structure of the library system and the coordination of its subdivisions, correlation of libraries and information bodies, financial questions, library management, training of library personnel, the legal deposit system.

The implementation of library laws has made it possible to create a broad system of public, children's, scientific, special and other libraries in all the socialist countries. These libraries possess vast book stocks that are available to all working-people. Concrete information on the achievements of librarianship in the socialist countries was presented at previous sessions of the Federation and the current data will be, apparently, cited in the course of work of the sections and committees at this session.

It should also be mentioned here that library activities are stimulated not only by library legislation, but also by the provisions of those laws which are concerned with the organization of education, the press and other mass media, and with questions of culture, technology and science.

Legislation of the socialist countries in all these fields is permeated with the ideas of humanism and genuine internationalism. The laws of the socialist countries prohibit the propaganda of war, racialism, chauvinism, cruelty, violence and pornography in all their forms. There is no rooms on the stocks of our libraries for publications containing materials of this kind. In return all the finest creations of world culture are available to our readers. Such works are reprinted many times and are popularized by librarians, who always remember V.I.Lenin's statement that one can become a communist only when one has replenished one's memory with the knowledge of all those riches that mankind has created.[1)]

Librarians of the socialist countries are proud of their library legislation which mirrors the profound and true democratic character of librarianship. At the same time they are well aware that this legislation must be further improved. This problem faces the librarians of the Soviet Union in particular. In 1977 the new Constitution of the USSR was approved. It legislatively consolidated the right of the citizens of the USSR to use the achievements of culture and this is ensured by the availability of cultural values kept in state and social stocks to all, the development and even distribution of cultural and educational

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1) Lenin V.I. Complete collection of works, vol. 41, p.305

institutions throughout the territory of the country, the development of the system of free libraries, the expansion of cultural exchange with foreign countries (Clause 46 of the Constitution of the USSR). In this way the right to use free libraries has in the USSR become constitutional.

The approval of the new Constitution has made all legislatius in the USSR more vital. The time has come to work out a new library law and in drawing up the draft all the vast expetience of development of Soviet libraries is taken in account. At the same time the experience of other countries of the world is being profoundly studied.

IFLA has become the centre of exchange of professional experience and the generalization of the results of work of librarians of many countries. The working out of models of library laws, including those concerned with different questions (legal deposit, for example) substantially assists librarians in their work. We would like to suggest that IFLA increase its activity in this field and draw the attention of UNESCO to this problem. This would help us to solve ~~pxxhkxmxxXkisxxmxkdxkxkx~~ many questions on a higher level and with greater efficiency for the benefit of librarianship.

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